

PRESIDENT MONSON WANTS TO SEE YOU

About 15 years ago I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Four years later my health was steadily declining, and I was using a wheelchair. I felt extremely frustrated by my condition because for my entire life, I had been very active.

About that time I went to a conference in Dundee, Scotland, attended by President Thomas S. Monson, then a counselor in the First Presidency. Following the meeting, a member approached me.

"Brother Sharkey?"

"Aye?"

"Come down to the front to see President Monson."

I had no

intention of doing that, but a few minutes later the man returned.

"Brother Sharkey," he said, "President Monson is waiting to see you."

"But he doesn't know me," I replied.

"Even so, he is waiting to see you. He has heard about your illness."

I agreed and went to see President Monson. He greeted me warmly and asked whether I would like a priesthood blessing. I told him I would.

We found a room, and President Monson asked whom I would like to anoint me.

I asked if we could send for my bishop. When someone left to

find him, one of President Monson's traveling companions reminded him that if they didn't leave soon, they would not make it to the Edinburgh airport on time.

President Monson smiled and, referring to himself and to me, responded, "When you're our age, you learn to prioritize. We'll be there in time."

When my bishop arrived, he and President Monson administered to me. The blessing President Monson gave me was not a blessing of healing; it was about managing my condition and its accompanying ailments. It was also a blessing for my family to be able to help me in managing my disease.

Now, a decade later, I still have Parkinson's, but at age 74 I am doing well. I have indeed found ways to manage my illness. I feel good, and I have not used a wheelchair since the day I received the blessing. My doctor calls me his "star patient."

I will always be grateful to President Monson for his kindness in speaking to and blessing a man he didn't know. But I'll also be grateful for what he taught me about using the priesthood.

We hold different keys and offices in the Church, but we hold the same priesthood. President Monson's kind act taught me that the priesthood isn't about who holds it but about how we use it to bless the lives of Heavenly Father's children. ■

George Sharkey, Scotland

President Monson greeted me warmly and asked whether I would like a priesthood blessing.

BLESSED BY THE PRIESTHOOD

I joined the Church as a single mother in 1996, several years after my twin sister, Theresa, joined. When Theresa was baptized, a mutual friend said to me, “Why would she join that church? They make their women stay in the background.”

From association with members of the Church, I knew that my friend’s understanding was inaccurate—the marriages I saw among members of the Church were some of the strongest and most equal I had ever seen. I knew that only men in the Church held the priesthood, but I sensed that they used the priesthood to benefit all.

That truth was reinforced to me when I was diagnosed with breast cancer 11 years after my baptism. Upon hearing the news, I received a spiritual prompting that I should seek a priesthood blessing, which I did that evening. In the blessing, I was promised that the cancer would leave my body, that my body would be made whole, and that the Spirit would guide my doctors.

That blessing was the first of many I would receive over the next three years of treatment and surgeries. It gave me faith to know that healing would come physically if it was the Lord’s will or that it would come spiritually—and I would be given strength to deal with my trial.

I experienced the second kind of healing one night following an



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operation. I remember waking up in extreme pain. Just then this thought entered my mind: “You know that you will get better. You have been promised that your body will be made whole. You know you’re going to get through this.”

On another occasion I woke up in the middle of the night worried about the future. “What is going to happen to me?” I wondered. That panic lasted for a couple of hours, but

it was the only time during my three-year battle that I felt such anxiety. The peace from the priesthood blessings I received sustained me and enabled me to get through things I thought I couldn’t endure.

The priesthood continued to strengthen me through a postoperative infection and a serious fever. One night during this time my brother-in-law came to the hospital and gave me a blessing. My temperature had been rising all day, but after the blessing it steadily declined. I was amazed but not surprised.

I saw the promise come to fruition that my doctors would be guided. When I awoke after one of my operations, the surgeon came to see me.

“I was all done,” she explained, “but something told me to go deeper, and I found additional problem areas, which I was able to remove. We’re fortunate to have found them.”

She is not a member of the Church, but the promise of the blessing I had received early on had come to pass. The Spirit had guided her.

I am grateful for the worthy priesthood holders in my ward and family who have reached out to me and used the priesthood to bless my life. I am grateful for their wives who support and sustain them as they honor their priesthood and use it to bless others. Most of all, I am grateful that Heavenly Father has blessed us with His power on earth, a power that blesses all of His children. ■

Virginia Gillis, Massachusetts, USA

DAD, I NEED YOU

I was moving sprinkler pipes on a section of our farm in northern California, USA. This particular day was a treat because Dad was there to help me. When we finished, we jumped on our all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and headed for home with dinner on our minds. Dad led the way.

Our farm was bordered on one side by the Pit River. We rode on the edge of the field so we wouldn't flatten the alfalfa with the big tires on our ATVs. The field was on our right, and the river, at the bottom of a steep embankment, was on our left. We couldn't see very well because it was misty.

We were cruising along fairly fast when I veered off the trail and hit a clump of sagebrush with my right rear tire. The impact forced me to turn the ATV sharply to the left toward the river and down the embankment. I tried stopping, but the bank was too steep and I was going too fast. I thought for sure I was going in the river. Fortunately, there was a tree on the bank right in my path. The next thing I knew, I was looking down at the ATV—from the tree! I was as scared as I had ever been.

I felt that I had just had a brush with death, but other than a few scratches and bruises, I was unhurt. After I calmed down and took a few breaths, I realized there was no way I was going to get the ATV back up the bank by myself. I kept expecting my dad to poke his head over the edge of the embankment, looking for me, but he

didn't. That made me feel even worse.

I scrambled to the top of the bank, but my dad was nowhere in sight. I said a silent prayer to my Father in Heaven, asking Him to send Dad back to get me. Then I started walking.

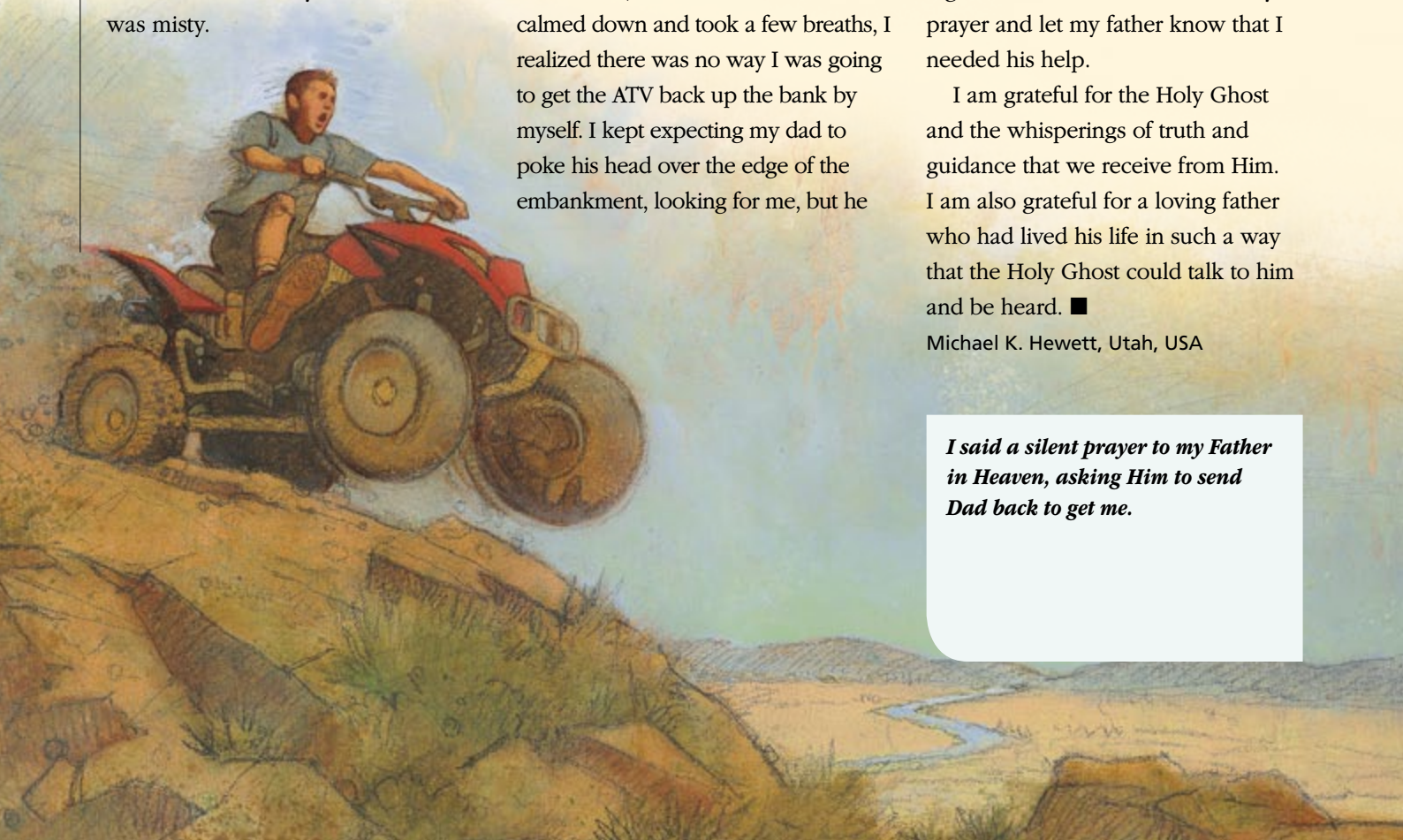
Meanwhile, Dad was almost home when he thought he heard me call out to him. He looked back for the first time since we had left the field. Only then did he notice that I wasn't behind him. He knew something was wrong and came looking for me until he found me.

Dad later told me that he had heard me say, "Dad, I need you!" At the time, he was more than two miles (3 km) away. I knew then that a loving Father in Heaven had heard my prayer and let my father know that I needed his help.

I am grateful for the Holy Ghost and the whisperings of truth and guidance that we receive from Him. I am also grateful for a loving father who had lived his life in such a way that the Holy Ghost could talk to him and be heard. ■

Michael K. Hewett, Utah, USA

I said a silent prayer to my Father in Heaven, asking Him to send Dad back to get me.



WOULD YOU LIKE A BLESSING?

One morning I was walking up a steep hill on the south side of the Brigham Young University campus when I heard a crash behind me. I turned around and saw a young man lying facedown on the pavement, his bike several yards away in pieces. I stood in shock until he weakly tried to lift his head. Then I hurried toward him, along with four other people who had been walking up the hill.

The student who reached the biker first carefully turned him over, revealing severe cuts on the biker's lips, nose, chin, and eyebrow. Another student called for help on his cell phone. A young mother standing next to me offered a piece of cloth, and the first student stanching the biker's bleeding lip with it. A second woman and I stood by, anxiously waiting for paramedics to come.

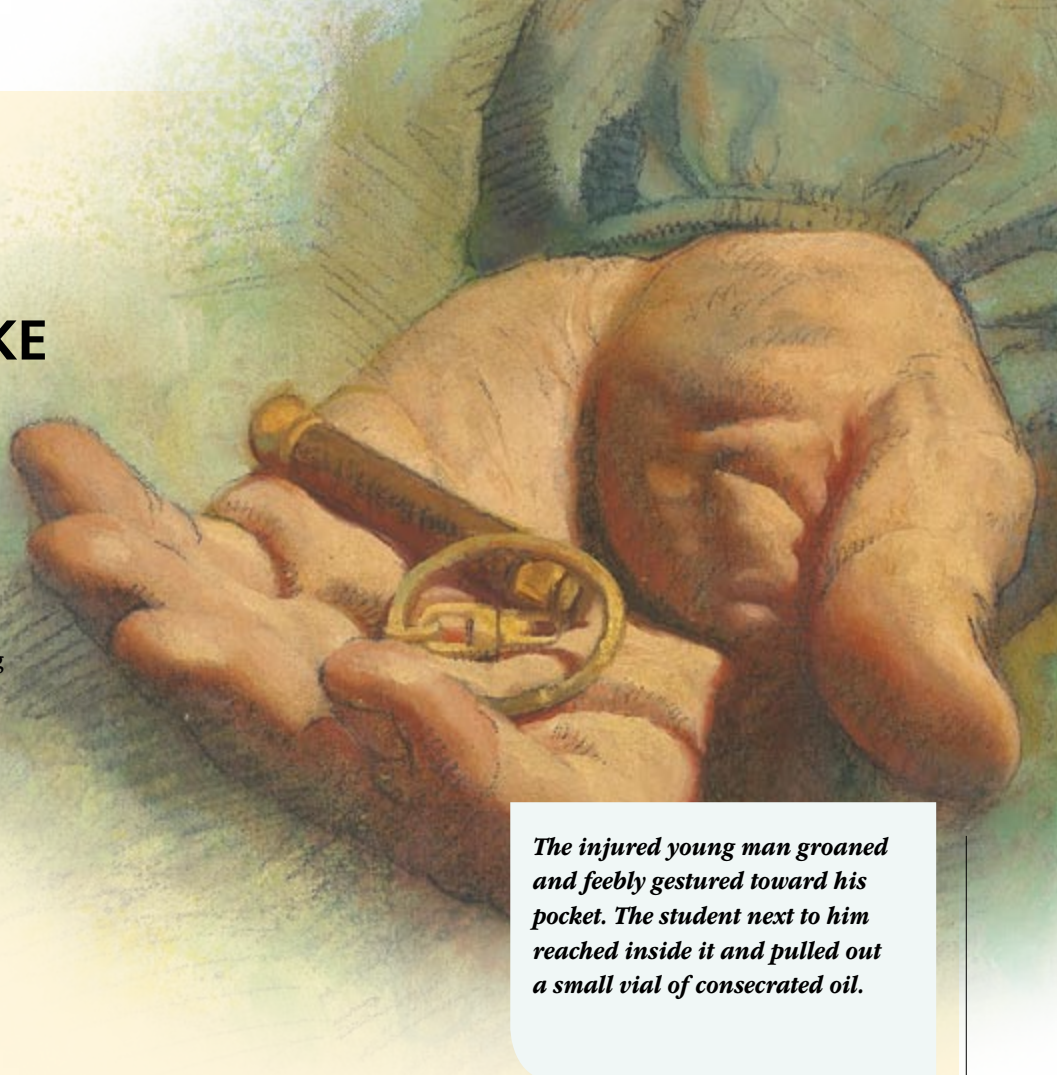
The injured man's eyes flickered open, and he looked in confusion at the faces around him.

"Where am I?" he said. "What happened?"

The student holding the cloth to his lips answered, "You're on the south side of campus. You crashed your bike."

The biker groaned. "It hurts," he said. "Help me."

The student said that help was on



The injured young man groaned and feebly gestured toward his pocket. The student next to him reached inside it and pulled out a small vial of consecrated oil.

the way and asked the young man his name.

"David," he said, sobbing softly. "Where am I?" he asked again.

An older man in a suit—likely a professor—approached and asked David if he wanted a blessing. He nodded gratefully.

The professor paused. "I don't have any oil, though," he said, looking around. Those nearby shook their heads. The injured young man groaned and feebly gestured toward his pocket. The student next to him reached inside it and pulled out a large key ring with a small vial of consecrated oil attached.

"He has some!" exclaimed the student.

The biker calmed down as soon as the professor and the male students

laid their hands on his head and gave him a blessing. A feeling of calm came over me too as the professor promised the young man that he would recover, be at peace, and draw nearer to the Savior through this experience.

Soon the paramedics came and took the biker away. As I walked to class, I realized that he carried consecrated oil with him so he could use the priesthood to bless someone in need. This day, however, he himself was blessed. I left with a deep feeling of love for faithful men who live ready to bless others and for the Lord, who also blesses them. ■

Lia McClanahan, Utah, USA